

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 00863 181837Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6849

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0863

NODIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY VEST AND DIRECTOR GENERAL BARNES

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, UR, US

SUBJECT: ONWARD ASSIGNMENT FOR DONALD KURSCH

REF: MOSCOW 833

1. NOW THAT WE ARE FACED WITH THE UNHAPPY NECESSITY OF TRANSFERRING DONALD KURSCH, IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE THAT HIS CAREER IS IN NO WAY HARMED BY THIS TURN OF EVENTS OVER WHICH HE HAD ABSOLUTELY NO CONTROL. KURSCH IS ONE OF OUR MOST CAPABLE AND ENERGETIC OFFICERS AND HIS DEPARTURE WILL BE A SERIOUS BLOW TO OUR EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN AN ACTIVE COMMERCIAL PROGRAM HERE. HE HAS ORGANIZED SOME OF OUR MOST EFFECTIVE COMMERCIAL EXHIBITS, HAS WON CONSISTENT PRAISE FROM THE U.S. BUSINESSMEN WITH WHOM HE DEALS, AND ALSO HAS FOUND TIME TO DO PERCEPTIVE REPORTING ON ECONOMIC AND TRADE MATTERS. HE IS FURTHERMORE AN ACCOMPLISHED LINGUIST, WITH FRENCH, GERMAN, HUNGARIAN AND RUSSIAN. ANY POST IN A POSITION TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR MISFORTUNE WILL BE THE GAINER.

2. IN ADDITION TO KURSCH'S PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS, ANOTHER FACTOR SHOULD BE KEPT IN MIND AS HIS NEXT
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ASSIGNMENT IS DETERMINED. THIS IS THAT ALL THE FOREIGN SERVICE PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THE USSR - ESPECIALLY THE AREA SPECIALISTS - WILL TAKE CAREFUL NOTE OF THE WAY KURSCH'S ONWARD ASSIGNMENT IS HANDLED. IF IT IS PERCEIVED THAT HE IS NOT TREATED FAIRLY - THAT THE DEPARTMENT DOES NOT STAND BEHIND HIM IN INSURING THAT HIS CAREER IS NOT DAMAGED - THEN THE EFFECT ON MORALE AND ON

JUDGMENTS REGARDING THE DESIRABILITY OF SPECIALIZATION IN SOVIET AFFAIRS IS CERTAIN TO BE SERIOUS. NO ONE HERE HAS FORGOTTEN MARSHALL BRENNENT'S EXPERIENCE AND DELAY IN LOCATING AN APPROPRIATE ONWARD ASSIGNMENT FOR KURSCH MIGHT LEAD SOME OF OUR MOST PROMISING OFFICERS TO CONCLUDE THAT THE PARTICULAR FORM OF RUSSIAN ROULETTE TO WHICH WE ARE ALL SUBJECT HERE IS SIMPLY TOO GREAT A CAREER RISK TO MAKE SPECIALIZATION ON THE USSR A DESIRABLE LONG-TERM GOAL.

3. FOR THESE REASONS I HOPE THAT I WILL BE IN A POSITION TO INFORM OUR STAFF WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF KURSCH'S ASSIGNMENT TO A POSITION WHICH IS CLEARLY COMMENSURATE WITH HIS RANK, ABILITY AND EXPERIENCE.

4. KURSCH WOULD BE MOST HAPPY TO GO TO THE OECD POSITION DISCUSSED BY DICK VINE AND BILL LUERS. I BELIEVE HE IS WELL QUALIFIED TO FILL IT AND HOPE THAT ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO ASSIGN HIM THERE WITHOUT DELAY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC PERSONNEL EXPULSIONS, PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS, CAT-A
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 jan 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW00863
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P810112-0913, N780001-0542
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780150/aaaabpyt.tel
Line Count: 82
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c8b1cfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 833
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 13 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3755862
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ONWARD ASSIGNMENT FOR DONALD KURSCH
TAGS: PINT, PDIP, UR, US, (KURSCH, DONALD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c8b1cfe2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014